



## Ruth Van Haitsma

April 21, 1925 - July 29, 2015

Ruth Romaine Van Haitsma was born to Grace and Nicholas Ralph Romaine, the third of three children, in Teaneck, New Jersey, April 21, 1925. She graduated from Rutgers University and interned as a dietician at Scripps Metabolic Institute in La Jolla, California. She worked for three years at a Veterans Hospital in White River Junction in Vermont before earning a Master's degree in nutrition from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. She accepted a three-year appointment as a dietician at a Presbyterian mission hospital in Asyut, Egypt. At the time, her fiancé, Glenn Van Haitsma, was serving in a U.S. State Department Refugee Relief Program in post-war Germany. Their courtship included a kiss while sitting on a paw of the Sphinx. Ruth and Glenn married in Frutigen, Switzerland, and began married life in Hamburg Germany. The couple returned to the U.S. where Glenn taught English at Syracuse University and Ruth worked in the University food service and mothered her first child, Susan. In 1958 they moved to Waukesha, Wisconsin where Glenn taught English at Carroll College for 35 years and Ruth had three more children: Martha, Sara and Daniel. Ruth also found time to teach at Gray Mare Nursery for many years and to earn re-accreditation as a registered dietician. She served as a dietician at Woodlands Nursing Home, the Virginia Nursing Home and Avalon Manor. She also did some private consulting with weight-loss patients. She lived in Waukesha for 53 years, with the exception of two years spent abroad, one in Japan and one in China, where Glenn held teaching positions. In 2011, Ruth and Glenn moved to

Freedom Village retirement center in Holland, Michigan. Ruth passed away in her home on July 29, 2015. Ruth was active at First Presbyterian Church in Waukesha as both elder and deacon, and in Church Women United. She was an advocate for peace and human rights throughout her life. In the community, Ruth was very involved in refugee resettlement for Vietnamese families and with Cuban boatlift refugees. Ruth helped start Hebron House, a Waukesha shelter for the homeless. She started a prisoner visitation program when the Milwaukee County women's prison moved temporarily to Waukesha. She was active in the United Nations Association Waukesha chapter. She established the still-on-going annual United Nations Association Traveling Film Festival at Carroll University in 2005 as a way to promote dialogue and peaceful ways of thinking about global human issues. Ruth actively supported Ploughshare Fair Trade Marketplace, campaigning to get local churches to use fair-trade coffee for their events. She would often fill the role of surrogate grandmother for neighborhood children: organizing a child's birthday party, taking children to the library or a museum, or spending one-on-one time with them. She wanted all God's children to know love and attention. Ruth is survived and will be dearly missed by her husband of 59 years, Glenn Van Haitsma, her children Susan (Jeff Webster), Martha (Gustavo Bamberger), Sara (Dean Wagner) and Daniel (Maryanne Karpiej Van Haitsma), her grandchildren, Aaron and Nathan Bamberger, and Emily and Abigail Van Haitsma, her brother William Romaine, her cousin Libby Hillegonds, her in-laws Dale (Charlotte) Van Haitsma, Terry Van Haitsma, Carol (Dale Eding) De Korte, her nieces and nephews; the Hoa and Van Truong family including children Trang (Hao Dinh), Trinh (Albert Chang), Linh (Tom Chen), Hai (Regina) and Tim, and by many others. Ruth was preceded in death by her parents and brother Benjamin Romaine. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to Hospice of Holland, 270 Hoover Blvd, Holland MI 49423. A memorial service will be held in the Chapel at Freedom Village, 145 Columbia Ave in Holland MI on Saturday August 1 at 1:30 PM. [www.yntemafh.com](http://www.yntemafh.com)



# Tribute Wall



“ *Ruth Van Haitsma*

August 31, 2022 at 01:26 PM



“ *"Our hearts go out to the entire VanHaistma family. Ruth led such an interesting and amazing life--she was a lovely lady who will be greatly missed by all. Big hugs to the whole family, especially to you, Martha! Sincerely, Valda Pakalns and Tom Devine"*

**Valda Pakalns** - August 04, 2015 at 12:00 AM



“ *"Ruth was so sweet and I have such fond memories of her at all the Carroll events. Glenn - I am so sorry for your loss. Your heart must be heavy but your memories will provide comfort and peace in the days ahead. As I read her life story, I am humbled and amazed at all she accomplished. Please know my thoughts will be with you in the days ahead. Please accept my heartfelt condolences."*

**Linda Sklander** - August 03, 2015 at 12:00 AM



“ *"Ruth was a tireless fighter for liberal causes, a person who not only identified as Christian but who put her faith into action to better the lives of those less fortunate. She will be greatly missed."*

**lori duin kelly** - August 03, 2015 at 12:00 AM

LH

“Glenn,  
*I was saddened to hear of your loss. I have such fond memories of my all too brief visits with you and Ruth. What a wonderful and rich life she led! I hope that I will have an opportunity to see you again sometime in Waukesha in the future. With all warm regards and heartfelt sympathies.*”

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**Larry Harper** - August 03, 2015 at 12:00 AM

VE

“*Our heartfelt condolences to the Van Haitsma family.*”

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**Vern** - August 02, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SH

“*Know that we will be with you in spirit, Ruth, as well as with Glenn, your family and friends as they all celebrate your incredibly wonderful life on Saturday, August 1 at Freedom Village. And know, also, Ruth, that you continue to live in all of us whom you have impacted with your endless examples of selfless loving and efforts toward social justice for all in our world. In your honor, we, with many of your friends, will be having a Peace Vigil in front of the Waukesha Library on SUNDAY, August 9 at 1 pm. The same place that you, Glenn and Judith held vigils each Sunday for so many years! With endless love, Sara and Bud Hudson,*”

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**Sara and Bud Hudson** - August 01, 2015 at 12:00 AM

GH

“*Glenn, we are thinking of you and your family today as we also remember Ruth, who surely did justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly with God. Peace be with you. Gene and Shirley Hauge*”

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**Gene and Shirley Hauge** - August 01, 2015 at 12:00 AM

LC

“*What a wonderful life Ruth lived. Peace, Glenn.*”

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**Lamar Cope** - July 31, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CB

“*Ruth was a great Lady and a very nice person, we are very sad and offer our condolences to the Van Haitsma family. We will miss her well crafted letters and good ideas. Carlos & Elena Bamberger*”

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**Carlos Bamberger** - July 31, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MF

“*Glenn,  
Wanted to let you know that you are in my prayers. Ruth did so much for the world!  
Mary Fay  
Former MOW Coordinator and ED of The Caring Place, Inc.*”

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**Mary Fay** - July 31, 2015 at 12:00 AM

EC

“*It is with a broken heart and fond memories that I send my condolences. Such giving and kind people as Ruth should be among us on this earth for an eternity. I still feel Ruth's warmth and will always cherish her passion for human rights, teaching and learning, and her joy in living life to the fullest. Elena*”

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**Elena De Costa** - July 30, 2015 at 12:00 AM

HH

“*Sorry to hear of this. I didn't know Ruth as well as many, but she was a wonderful and caring person. I admired her political and social activism. Our best wishes to Glen. Hugo Hartig*”

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**Hugo Hartig** - July 30, 2015 at 12:00 AM